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AMERICAN FLIERS-PRECEDE CHARLESTON DAY
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WASHINGTON, MARCH 29 (AP)-GOVERNMENT SOURCES INDICATED TODAY THAT FLIERS ROBERT THOMPSON AND ROBERT SWANNER WERE ON A PRIVATE MISSION--NOT AN OFFICIAL ONE--WHEN THEY DISAPPEARED OVER CUBA IN DECEMBER 1961.

THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY THE FAMILIES OF THE MISSING MEN, WHO TOLD FRIENDS THEY WERE GOING IN A LEAFLET-DROPPING FLIGHT, HAVE RECEIVED NO GOVERNMENT BENEFITS.

AFTER AN INQUIRY, THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY REPORTEDLY DENIED TO SEN. GEORGE SMATHERS, D-FLA., THAT THE MEN HAD BEEN IN ITS EMPLOY.

SMATHERS AND TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE BEEN ASKED BY THE FAMILIES FOR SOME HELP, AT LEAST FOR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS. BUT THE CONGRESSMEN SO FAR HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DETERMINE THAT THE FAMILIES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THESE BENEFITS.

THE FAMILIES HAVE NOT BEEN RECEIVING ANY REGULAR COMPENSATION FROM PRIVATE SOURCES, EITHER. THIS SETS THEIR FLIGHT APART FROM THAT OF THE WIDOWS IN THE BAY OF PIGS INVASION IN APRIL 1961.

THESE WIDOWS RECEIVE REGULAR CHECKS FROM A TRUST FUND SET UP BY THE DOUBLE CORK (CQ) CORP. OF MIAMI.

INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE FOUR MEN WHOT DOWN IN THE BAY OF PIGS INVASION WERE ON A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED MISSION WHILE THE TWO FLIERS DROPPING LEAFLETS EIGHT MONTHS LATER WERE NOT. THEY MAY HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED BY ANTI-CASTRO REFUGEES.

THE FACTS SURROUNDING THE THOMPSON AND SWANNER CASE ARE MEAGER AND CONFUSED, BUT THIS PICTURE EMERGES:

THOMPSON, 28, OF CHARLESTON, W. VA., AND SWANNER, 26, OF MIAMI, LEFT FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA., ON DEC. 14, 1961, IN A TWIN-ENGINE PRIVATE PLANE. FRANK FIORINI OF MIAMI ACCOMPANIED THEM.

FIORINI SAID THE TWO WERE ON A LEAFLET-DROPPING MISSION, AND HE ACCOMPANIED THEM TO THEIR FIRST STOP, A SECRET BASE IN THE BAHAMAS.

THOMPSON, WHO MADE SUCH FLIGHTS BEFORE, HAD A LETTER FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT FORBIDDING HIM TO FLY OVER CUBA AGAIN.

"THE MEN WERE WELL PAID FOR WHAT THEY WERE DOING," FIORINI SAID. "AND THEY WERE DOING IT WITH A GREEN LIGHT FROM THE CIA AND THE BORDER PATROL."

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE BORDER PATROL, HOWEVER, SAID TODAY THAT "WE HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH IT."

ACCORDING TO FIORINI, THOMPSON AND SWANNER LEFT THE BAHAMAS BASE AND HEADED FOR THE CUBAN CITY OF MATANZAS WHERE THEY WERE TO DROP LEAFLETS AND RETURN. BUT THEY NEVER CAME BACK.